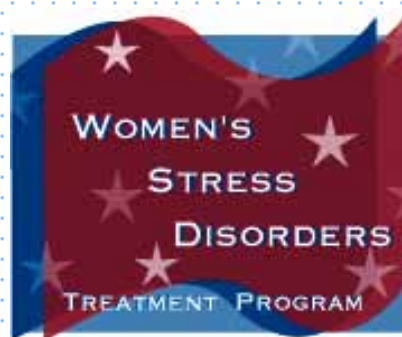
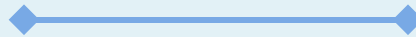


# ***Journey Through Grief and Loss***

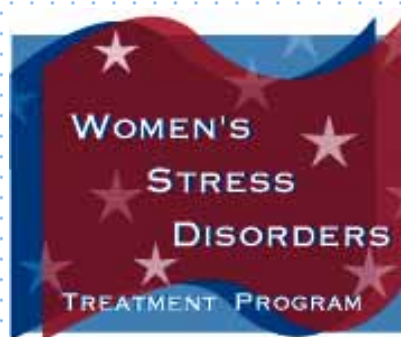


## **Women's Stress Disorders Treatment Program**

William S. Middleton VA Hospital  
2500 Overlook Terrace  
Madison, WI 53705  
608-280-7084

Grief is a tidal wave that overtakes you,  
smashes down upon you with unimaginable force,  
sweeps you up into its darkness,  
where you tumble and crash against unidentifiable  
surfaces,  
only to be thrown out on an unknown beach,  
bruised, reshaped.

*Ericsson, 1993*



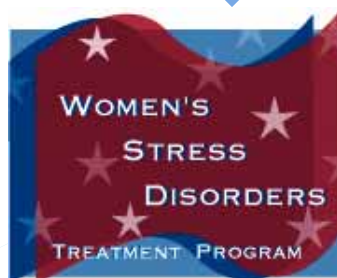
**Women's Stress Disorders  
Treatment Program**

William S. Middleton VA Hospital  
2500 Overlook Terrace  
Madison, WI 53705  
608-280-7084

## ***Understanding grief and loss:***

**Certainly, loss of a loved one is a primary cause of grief and loss reactions.**

- Loss of a spouse through death or divorce
- Loss of a parent or child through death or divorce
- Loss of a family member or friend
- Miscarriage
- Loss of a beloved pet



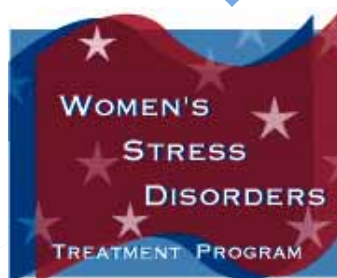
### **Women's Stress Disorders Treatment Program**

William S. Middleton VA Hospital  
2500 Overlook Terrace  
Madison, WI 53705  
608-280-7084

## ***Understanding grief and loss:***

There are many other situations that are, not as often, recognized as grief or loss but can still be quite painful:

- Loss of functioning through disability
- Loss of sense of identity
- Loss of sense of security
- Loss of childhood through abuse or neglect
- Loss of a job or financial stability
- Loss of health

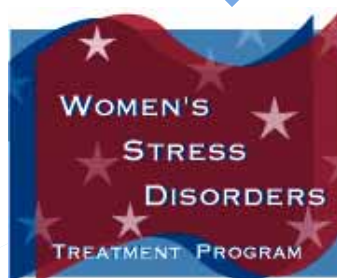


### **Women's Stress Disorders Treatment Program**

William S. Middleton VA Hospital  
2500 Overlook Terrace  
Madison, WI 53705  
608-280-7084

***When you experience  
a loss keep in mind the  
following points:***

- ◆ Give yourself sufficient time to grieve. You may not feel up to your normal activities for a time. Mourning a loss in your life can sap you of your energy and joy. Allowing yourself to slow down a bit will help you recover in the long run.
- ◆ Grief does not follow any time schedule. Some people may begin to feel better sooner than others. Allow yourself time to grieve for as long as you need it.



**Women's Stress Disorders  
Treatment Program**

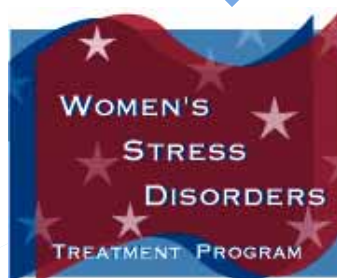
William S. Middleton VA Hospital  
2500 Overlook Terrace  
Madison, WI 53705  
608-280-7084

***When you experience  
a loss keep in mind the  
following points:***

- ◆ Grief is a normal reaction to a loss.
- ◆ Many people who have studied grief reactions believe that there are many stages you go through when grieving: denial and isolation, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance. These stages may come in different orders and be re-experienced over and over again in varying intensities. (Elizabeth Kubler Ross, On Death and Dying.)

*No one ever told me that grief felt so much like fear.*

*C.S. Lewis*



**Women's Stress Disorders  
Treatment Program**

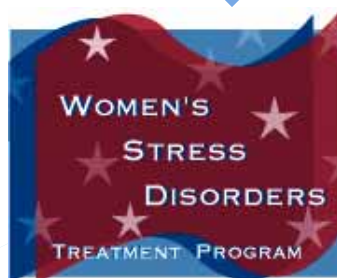
William S. Middleton VA Hospital  
2500 Overlook Terrace  
Madison, WI 53705  
608-280-7084



***When you experience  
a loss keep in mind the  
following points:***

- ◆ **Grief may make you feel physically ill.**
- ◆ **Physical sensations may include the following:**
  - Hollowness in your stomach
  - Tightness in your chest
  - Oversensitive to noise
  - A sense of “depersonalization” where nothing seems real
  - Breathlessness or short of breath
  - Weakness in your muscles
  - Dry mouth
  - Lack of energy
  - Tightness in your throat

*Worden, J. W.*



**Women's Stress Disorders  
Treatment Program**

William S. Middleton VA Hospital  
2500 Overlook Terrace  
Madison, WI 53705  
608-280-7084

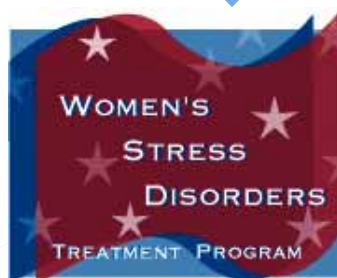
***When you experience  
a loss keep in mind the  
following points:***

**You may feel overwhelmed with any, or all, of the  
following:**

Sadness  
Anger  
Guilt and self-  
reproach  
Anxiety  
Loneliness  
Fatigue  
Helplessness

Shock  
Yearning  
Relief  
Numbing  
Disbelief  
Confusion  
Preoccupation

***Worden, J.W.***



**Women's Stress Disorders  
Treatment Program**

William S. Middleton VA Hospital  
2500 Overlook Terrace  
Madison, WI 53705  
608-280-7084



***When you experience  
a loss keep in mind the  
following points:***

**You may have problems with any, or all  
of the behaviors listed below for a while:**

Sleep disturbance/dreams

Appetite change

Absent mindedness

Social withdrawal

Crying

Sighing

Restless over activity

Avoid reminders of the loss

***Worden, J.W.***



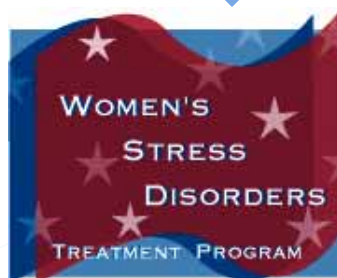
**Women's Stress Disorders  
Treatment Program**

William S. Middleton VA Hospital  
2500 Overlook Terrace  
Madison, WI 53705  
608-280-7084

## ***Suggestions for Coping with Grief and Loss:***

### **Be kind to yourself...**

Allow yourself enough time and space to adequately recover. Our society is too fast paced and sometimes expects people to recover too quickly. This means honoring the fact that you are grieving and not feeling up to par. You may need more rest, more time spent with friends and family, and fewer demands. If possible, try to structure things at a slower pace for yourself.



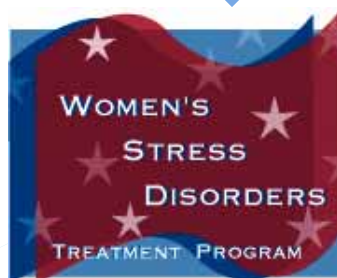
### **Women's Stress Disorders Treatment Program**

William S. Middleton VA Hospital  
2500 Overlook Terrace  
Madison, WI 53705  
608-280-7084

## ***Suggestions for Coping with Grief and Loss:***

### **Be kind to yourself...**

Give yourself permission to grieve. This may mean giving yourself some time alone to cry, or time to remember happier times. Sometimes surrounding yourself with pictures will be comforting and helpful, other times, you may want to avoid looking at them. Do what feels right to you.



### **Women's Stress Disorders Treatment Program**

William S. Middleton VA Hospital  
2500 Overlook Terrace  
Madison, WI 53705  
608-280-7084

## ***Suggestions for Coping with Grief and Loss:***

**Be kind to yourself...**

**Accept help from others when it is offered. This is difficult if you are more used to giving help than getting it. You will likely find a way to give back to others for acts of kindness you graciously accept now.**

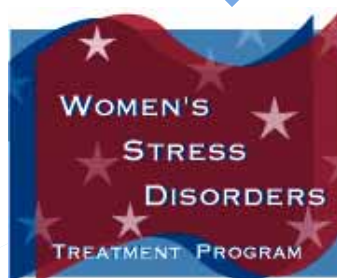


### **Women's Stress Disorders Treatment Program**

William S. Middleton VA Hospital  
2500 Overlook Terrace  
Madison, WI 53705  
608-280-7084

## ***Suggestions for Coping with Grief and Loss:***

- ◆ Join a support group in your area. Most hospitals or Hospices in your area have some kind of group that might be helpful.
- ◆ Make a list of people you can call when you feel overwhelmed with grief. Accept their help and support.

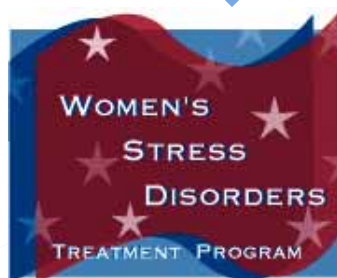


### **Women's Stress Disorders Treatment Program**

William S. Middleton VA Hospital  
2500 Overlook Terrace  
Madison, WI 53705  
608-280-7084

## ***Suggestions for Coping with Grief and Loss:***

- ◆ Anniversaries, birthdays, holidays and other special events may cause you to feel your grief more intensely. Anticipate that this may be a more difficult time and plan for it.
- ◆ You may find it helpful to plan to do things differently in honoring your loss. For example, you may decide to plant a tree every year for a lost loved one's birthday.



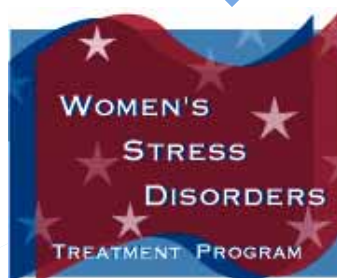
### **Women's Stress Disorders Treatment Program**

William S. Middleton VA Hospital  
2500 Overlook Terrace  
Madison, WI 53705  
608-280-7084



## ***Suggestions for Coping with Grief and Loss:***

- ◆ You may want to plan a special remembrance for holidays like lighting a candle and talking about the good times enjoyed with your loved one.
- ◆ For the *first* of any anniversary or holiday you may feel better if your plans change from your normal routine all together. For example, visit someone else. Do what feels right to you.



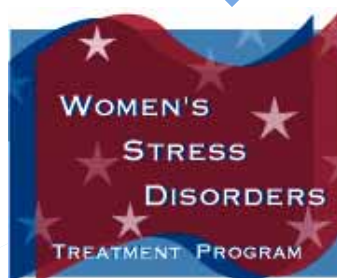
### **Women's Stress Disorders Treatment Program**

William S. Middleton VA Hospital  
2500 Overlook Terrace  
Madison, WI 53705  
608-280-7084



## ***Suggestions for Coping with Grief and Loss:***

- ◆ Sometimes the feelings you have about the loss may even be conflicting which will cause you to feel confused. There may be times that you feel glad or relieved about the loss but at the same time very upset.
- ◆ It may be helpful to talk to a counselor or therapist for a time to help sort out these feelings.

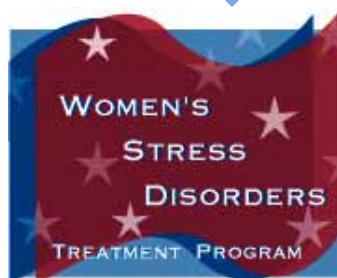


### **Women's Stress Disorders Treatment Program**

William S. Middleton VA Hospital  
2500 Overlook Terrace  
Madison, WI 53705  
608-280-7084

## ***Suggestions for Coping with Grief and Loss:***

- ◆ For some people, grief seems endless. You endure one trauma or tragedy after another. You may feel you never had time to recover from one loss before the next one occurred.
- ◆ If this is the case you may be suffering from “complicated grief” which never seems to get better.
- ◆ It is difficult to deal with this without the help of a professional. Ask your doctor for a referral to a therapist.



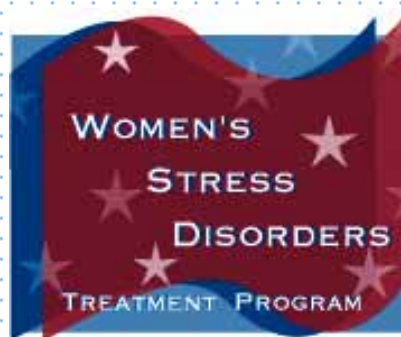
### **Women's Stress Disorders Treatment Program**

William S. Middleton VA Hospital  
2500 Overlook Terrace  
Madison, WI 53705  
608-280-7084

***Grief never, entirely, goes away but  
you can learn to live with it.***

***“Sadness flies on the wings of the morning and  
out of the heart of darkness comes the light”***

***- Jean Giraudoux***



**Women's Stress Disorders  
Treatment Program**

William S. Middleton VA Hospital  
2500 Overlook Terrace  
Madison, WI 53705  
608-280-7084